

THE MOLLUSK COLLECTION OF THE BOSTON
SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY AND ITS
DISPOSITION

Richard I. Johnson

The Boston Society of Natural History was founded in 1830, but the first Curator of Mollusks, T. J. Whittmore, was not appointed until 1839. It was a few years before then that Amos Binney, J. P. Couthouy [Johnson, 1946, *Occ. Pap. Moll.* 1 (5)], A. A. Gould [Johnson, 1949, *Occ. Pap. Moll.* 1 (14)], and D. H. Storer were describing new species of mollusks in the Society's Journal and mentioning that specimens had been deposited in the collection. The first Catalogue of Mollusks, which had since disappeared, had several thousand entries, and was invaluable to me in determining accurately Couthouy's type specimens. The present seven substantial catalog volumes, consisting of some 27,000 entries, seems to have been begun toward the end of the Nineteenth Century.

Sarah Pickering Pratt (1807-1866) left her showy, but not scientifically valuable collection to the Society, along with the then considerable sum of \$10,000 for its care. A similar collection was received upon the death of Edward Richards Mayo (1891). Among the more important collections received before the turn of the century were the Hawaiian Achatinellidae of J. T. Gulick [Johnson, 1996, *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.* 155 (4)] and the Edward W. Roper collection of Cyrenidae. A significant New England collection was assembled by Dwight Blaney, List of shell-bearing mollusca of Frenchman's Bay, Maine, [1904, *Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist.* 32 (2)]. In 1914, all but the New England collections were sent to the MCZ. After the Society gave up research in 1946 and became the Museum of Science, even the extensive New England collection was transferred to the MCZ.